



Lewis and Clark Bridge Deck Replacement Project

Questions and Answers

What kind of construction is going to be done?

- The majority of the existing bridge deck will be replaced with new pre-cast concrete panels.
 - The existing raised, narrow sidewalks will be removed to provide a wider roadway, while still providing safe pedestrian access.
 - Bridge lighting will be added.
 - New bridge railings will be installed.
 - The bridge will be seismically retrofitted.
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Why isn't WSDOT building a new bridge instead?

The total cost for building a new bridge is \$200 million. Even with a one-way toll of \$2-\$2.50, both Washington and Oregon also would have to provide \$50 million each to pay for it. Due to tightening budgets in both states, that kind of money is not currently available. The repairs that need to be made on the current bridge are urgently needed and must be made as soon as possible. This cost of replacing the current bridge deck is estimated at \$30 million and will increase the service life of the bridge for another 25 years.

Why is the bridge being completely closed during construction?

The design of this deck replacement project requires the presence of large construction equipment on the bridge and the removal of 40 to 45 foot sections of existing bridge deck (both directions from edge to edge). This will make the bridge impassable to all traffic at certain times during construction. This deck replacement method was chosen because it allows the project to be completed sooner, minimizing long-term impacts to all bridge users as much as possible.

Why are the raised sidewalks being removed?

The existing bridge sidewalk removal will provide a level surface roadway consisting of two, 12-foot lanes (one in each direction) with 5 foot shoulders on each side. It was determined that this level surface will provide the best overall design for the majority of the bridge users as follows:

- The wider shoulders will allow room for traffic to maneuver around breakdowns and therefore maintain traffic flow.
 - The 5-foot wide shoulders will allow more space for bicyclists, who currently walk their bicycles across the bridge on narrow 39-inch wide sidewalks.
 - Pedestrians will still be able to utilize the shoulders to walk across the bridge.
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Will it be safe for pedestrians and bicyclists to use the new shoulders?

As part of the project, a wide, highly reflective, raised white stripe will mark the shoulders. This stripe makes an audible sound when driven on to alert motorists that they are leaving the driving lane and entering the shoulder.

The bridge also will be illuminated at night so motorists can see pedestrians or bicyclists better.

Why not just add a pedestrian platform or bridge on the side of the deck or under the bridge deck?

The existing bridge cannot handle the additional load of such a structure without extensive structural modifications to the bridge, which would potentially add an additional \$6 million to the cost of this project.

When will the bridge be totally closed?

Based on public input, the bridge will be open during the day and closed at night.

The bridge will be closed for approximately 140 nights. It was originally estimated that it would be necessary to close the bridge 200 nights. Since the last public meetings, WSDOT has worked hard to find ways to limit the number of night closures necessary and therefore limit the impact on the traveling public. WSDOT will continue to look for innovative ways to limit the number of closures to an even greater extent.

The nighttime closures will occur Sunday through Thursday from 9:30 p.m. until 5:30 a.m. Closures will be scheduled in set blocks of time, which will provide predictability on the closures and allow the public to make alternate travel plans. Advance notice of all closures and any changes to the closure schedule will occur will be provided as well.

There will be approximately four total weekend closures. There will be NO closures on holidays.

When will construction begin and end?

Construction will begin in January 2003. The project was originally scheduled to begin in late 2002, but WSDOT changed the project start date so as to not impact holiday traffic. This did not change the project's estimated completion date, which is December 2004.

How will I be notified about the bridge's closure schedule?

WSDOT will provide constantly updated project information to the public and to businesses via a 1-800 project information number, a project website, permanent and electronic message signs in the project vicinity, highway advisory radio messages and e-mailed and faxed updates and alerts. WSDOT also will work closely with local media to disseminate current information on both bridge closures and the project's status.

WSDOT is committed to notifying the public two weeks in advance for nightly closures and one month in advance for weekend closures.

Will a ferry be available to get me across the river when the bridge is closed?

WSDOT is providing passage on the Cathlamet Ferry free of charge during the bridge closures. During the closures, the ferry will operate 24 hours a day and will run continuously (rather than on the ½ hour).